

Take Care in the Heat

In January and February, we experienced some very hot weather. One benefit of the heat wave was that it focussed public attention on looking out for neighbours, friends and relatives. This 'call to action' builds stronger local communities.

Making sure that people were coping with the heat is particularly important for older people living at home in the community. Resthaven Community Services staff worked diligently to assist clients to stay safe in the heat. Home Support Workers checked clients and their home to ensure sufficient drinking water and that they were drinking it, the temperature and condition and availability of fans or air-conditioning, closed blinds, curtains, doors, windows, confirmed how often family members or carers checked on the person, advising and reminding clients of appropriate responses to exposure to hot weather and reported any concerns to supervisory staff

Planned activities (outing, appointments) were rescheduled to cooler parts of the day or to other days if possible. Additional measures included daily telephone checks, either directly or via Red Cross Telecross, for clients not scheduled a daily visit, extra weekend visits to clients with dementia who live alone to supplement their weekday visits and offering Resthaven offices/respite centres as places for clients who have no other options to find a cool place during the day.

Older people living in Resthaven's residential care facilities enjoy air-conditioned comfort - as long as the power is on! When power outages occur, staff take extra precautions to ensure residents take care in the heat. The health, safety and well being of our residents is our primary focus and staff are specially trained to care for older people using better practice techniques.

A core component of best practice training is Resthaven's Clinical Practice Manual, which provides evidence based recommendations and guidelines that focus on contemporary practice for nursing and care staff in both the community and residential aged care. Staff can easily access training and information relating to incontinence, nutrition and hydration, pain management, palliative care, oral and dental care, diabetes management, wound care as well as heat impact management. They are encouraged to undertake professional development and extend their expertise.

Resthaven has nine residential locations and a range of in-home care and support services and self management programs for older people and their carers.

For information about the range of services available, visit www.resthaven.asn.au or phone 8373 0211.